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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to measure the impact of the Virginia Community College System's (VCCS's) tuition increases on enrollment by randomly surveying students who had enrolled in the VCCS in fall 1991, but who had not enrolled for fall 1992. Some 76,191 of the 133,662 students enrolled in community colleges in fall 1991 did not re-enroll in fall 1992. Former students selected from six regions of the state to be surveyed completed telephone interviews. The 848 respondents who answered the question about the amount of their family income were the subjects of this study. Results of the study included the following: (1) the top reason students gave for not returning was not having the time for school; (2) only 15% of all students surveyed indicated that the cost of attending a community college was a factor in not returning; (3) overall, students with family incomes under $20,000 found tuition and fees to be an important factor in making the decision not to return; (4) 23% of students earning less than $20,000 cited the cost of attending college for not enrolling in the fall of 1992; (5) only 44% of those in the below $10,000 bracket and 36% of those in the $10,000-$19,999 bracket had applied for financial aid; (6) approximately 15% of low-income students probably eligible for financial aid did not apply for it; and (7) financial aid to students grew 43% between 1989-90 and 1991-92. Extensive data tables are included. (MAB)

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ED 361 019

VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

STUDY OF TUITION INCREASES AND THEIR EFFECTS ON ENROLLMENTS

Virginia Community College System
101 North 14th Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

January 25, 1993

JC 930 397

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VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

STUDY OF TUITION INCREASES AND THEIR EFFECTS ON ENROLLMENTS

The idea of studying the impact of tuition increases on enrollments was discussed at the March 26, 1992 meeting of the State Board for Community Colleges. At that meeting, the State Board increased the tuition rate for 1992-93, to $41.00 per credit hour for in-state students and $142.00 per credit hour for out-of-state students, and the State Board members registered their concerns about the impact which the tuition increases, from 1988-89 through 1992-93, have had or will have on student access to community colleges, especially the enrollments of minorities, women, and the economically disadvantaged. The State Board asked that a VCCS task force be formed to study the matter of tuition increases and the effects on enrollments and to provide the Board members with a report by the time of the annual meeting.

On July 2, 1992, the Chancellor convened a task force to study the effects of tuition increases on community college enrollments.

Task Force Charge

The task force, convened by the Chancellor, was composed of two State Board members, two community college presidents, three deans of instruction and a provost, a director of curriculum and research, a dean of finance and a financial officer, a representative from the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, and two System Office staff. The Chancellor provided the task force with the following charge:

> "The task force is charged with the responsibility of studying and reporting on the changes that have occurred to VCCS program enrollments, student demographic characteristics, and the distribution of financial aid, which suggest that tuition increases or other economic factors may have or may not have worked to limit the enrollments of females, minorities, and/or low income students. Once data trends are identified and analyses completed, then the findings should be used to forecast three levels of VCCS enrollments (low, medium, and high) that show the representation of females, minorities, and low income students in fall semester enrollments for 1993-1994."

Task Force Activities

The task force met three times, and the members accomplished the following:

- Discussed the charge in terms of identifying the kinds of information needed to determine the effects which higher tuition and fees, together with other costs of obtaining an education, are having on low income students' access to or persistence at the Virginia community colleges.

- As a result of the above discussion, the task force reviewed VCCS tuition data, fall term headcount and student demographic data, and the financial aid records. This review led to the understanding that at a time when the System's enrollments continue to grow, it is not possible to find, for the System as a whole, enrollment subgroups with declining numbers. There were instances where colleges in Southside Virginia or Southwest Virginia had lower numbers of first-time students or a drop in occupational-technical program evening students; but many conditions, other than cost, can bring about fewer enrollments in a particular enrollment classification.

- The task force members also concluded that financial aid data, though important in developing a profile of students who have applied for and received aid grants and loans, could not be used to determine the effects which higher costs were having on student access. Information about the difficulty that students have had paying ever higher costs for a college education is best obtained from those students who have been enrolled in the community colleges one fall term and who did not re-enroll the next fall. Therefore, the task force decided to conduct a Survey of Non-returning Students, using as the survey population those students who were enrolled in the fall 1991, but who did not re-enroll in the fall 1992. It was also determined that having students' family income data was essential to the study. Accordingly, students in the survey population would be asked a question about their family income.

- A draft of a non-returning student questionnaire was developed and revised. The survey included questions on --

  (1) the student's academic goal;

  (2) whether or not the student had applied for financial aid;

  (3) the type of financial aid received, if any;

  (4) whether or not the student had difficulty with enrolling in a desired course or program;

  (5) the student's reason(s) for not re-enrolling;

  (6) how important was the cost of tuition and fees in the student's decision not to return;

  (7) how important was the cost of books and materials in the student's decision not to return;

  (8) how important was the cost of child care in making a decision not to return;

  (9) how important was the lack of financial aid in making a decision not to return;

  (10) whether or not the student planned to return to the community college at a later date, and if so, indicate the term;

(11) whether or not the student had worked full- or part-time when he/she last attended a community college;

(12) whether or not an employer helped the student, if the student worked, with the payment of tuition and fees;

(13) whether or not an employer had helped a working student with the payment of textbooks and materials;

(14) whether or not an employer helped a working student with the payment of other expenses;

The Student's Personal Information --

(15) the student's marital status;

(16) whether or not the student's spouse worked;

(17) the number of children living at home;

(18) the student's family income grouped by the amounts of $0--$999; $10,000--$19,999; $20,000--$29,999; $30,000--$39,999; and $40,000 and above;

(19) whether or not the student is currently working, and

(20) whether or not the student is currently enrolled at another school.

The task force had considered the possibility of having survey forms printed and then mailed to a randomly selected number of non-returning students at each college. Two concerns arose about conducting the survey by mail. The return rate for community college surveys of non-returning students is usually in the range of 25% to 45%. Among follow-up surveys of former students, this type is the most difficult to administer. A second concern involved the survey time frame. Because fall 1992 data were not available until October 15, such survey activities as the selection of the population could not be done until the VCCS fall mid-term enrollment data files were closed. Accordingly, the method for administering the survey was changed from the use of a survey mailed to respondents to an interview procedure to be conducted by telephone.

Administering the Non-Returning Student Survey

Because of the magnitude of the survey project and the need to move expeditiously on the task force study, Dr. Robert N. Harris and the staff at the Survey Research Laboratory, Virginia Commonwealth University, were asked to conduct the phone survey and provide the System with data reports on their findings. The Laboratory staff are geared to conducting telephone survey projects like the Commonwealth Poll that is conducted by the Laboratory each fall. The survey has been conducted and data tables prepared on the students' responses. See the tables in the attached, *A Report to the Virginia Community College System on a Survey of Non-Returning Students, from the VCU Survey Research Laboratory.*

The survey procedures and the characteristics of the non-returning students who were surveyed are as follows:

Survey Procedures

The Survey Research Laboratory provided their statements regarding methods.

> "Interviewing for the Community Colleges Survey was conducted from the facilities of the Survey Research Laboratory at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond from October 29 to November 8, 1992. The sample was selected randomly from an electronic list provided by the Virginia Community College System of individuals who had been students in the community college system in the Fall, 1991 term, but who were not enrolled in the Fall, 1992 term.
>
> The sample was stratified to obtain at least 150 respondents in each of six geographic regions in Virginia. In the analyses based on the entire sample, responses have been weighted to reflect the actual proportion each region contributes to the total. In most cases, tables present weighted percents and unweighted frequencies. The unweighted results are used when frequencies or cross tabulations by region are presented.
>
> Interviews were conducted with 949 of these former community college students, with between 151 and 166 respondents in the regions. Interviews were completed with 84 percent of the households contacted. The remainder refused to participate, terminated the interview prior to completion, or were scheduled for a call back when the study ended.
>
> Questions answered by the entire sample of 949 are subject to a sampling error of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points at the 95 percent level of confidence. This means that in 95 of 100 samples like the one used here, the results obtained should be no more than 3.5 percentage points above or below the figure that would be obtained by interviewing all members of the population with telephones. Where the answers for subgroups are reported, the sampling error would be higher. For example, for the samples of about 150 in each of the regions, the sampling error is approximately 7 percent." *Source: A Report to the Virginia Community College System on a Survey of Non-Returning Students, Survey Research Laboratory, Pages 1-2.*

The six regions of the state, together with the colleges in each of the regions, are shown in the List on the next page.

Gender and Racial Characteristics of Non-Returning Students Who Responded to the Survey Question on Family Income

There were 949 non-returning students who responded to the survey questions. This survey sample of students included 12% who were black; 82%, white; and 6%, other races. The sample was composed of 57% females and 43% males.

LIST OF VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES BY REGIONS

Six Regions of the State, Together with the Community Colleges in each Region

Region 1:	Far Southwest Virginia	Mountain Empire Southwest Virginia
Region 2:	Southwestern	New River Patrick Henry Virginia Highlands Virginia Western Wytheville
Region 3:	Piedmont and Valley	Blue Ridge Central Virginia Dabney S. Lancaster Germanna Lord Fairfax Piedmont Virginia
Region 4:	Southside	Danville John Tyler Paul C. Camp Southside Virginia
Region 5:	Urban Corridor	J. Sargeant Reynolds Northern Virginia Thomas Nelson Tidewater
Region 6:	Rural/Maritime	Eastern Shore Rappahannock

See Table A for the percentages of students by family income categories and by the six regions of the state. Gender and race data appear in this table.

Scope of the Study

Some 76,191 of the 133,662 students enrolled in the community colleges in the fall 1991, did not re-enroll in the fall 1992. These so-called non-returning students comprised the student population (universe) to be studied. It should be noted for persons not familiar with the enrollment patterns of community college students that nearly three-fourths of all students are enrolled part-time. While 76,191 students who were enrolled in the fall 1991 did not re-enroll in the fall 1992, a group of 94,015 other students did return to the colleges in the fall 1992.

The presentation of the results and conclusions will be limited, for the most part, to the responses of the 848 students who answered the question about the amount of their *family income*. Some data on the total number (949) of respondents will be used for comparative purposes. Five levels of income in the survey form were used as a variable, and cross tabulations show how individuals in each income bracket responded to each of the questions in the survey. The results of the computer runs of cross tabulations appear as Table 7 -- taken from the VCU Report with all pages attached.

Study Results

In this paper the review of the relationship between family income and student responses includes three areas of inquiry: (1) the students' decision not to re-enroll in the fall 1992, (2) the importance of tuition and other costs in the students' decisions not to return to the community college in the fall 1992, and (3) the application for and receipt of financial aid. The conclusions to the study appear in the last section of the paper.

Decision Not to Return to a Community College: Open-Ended Question

During the telephone interview, non-returning students were asked to explain in their own words why they had not enrolled in the community colleges in the fall 1992.

Question 4: Why did you decide <u>not</u> to re-enroll in a community college?

The survey respondents gave reasons for not re-enrolling which are rank ordered with the response that was most cited coming first, the next most frequently mentioned response coming second, etc. The students' rank ordered responses are as follows: (1) no time or work schedule, (2) other reasons not specified by the questionnaire, (3) cost too much, no money, and no financial aid, (4) transferred to another college, (5) obtained the job skills and knowledge that was needed, (6) courses or programs not available, (7) got a degree or a certificate, and (8) dissatisfied with courses or teaching. See Table B for the percentage for each of the rank ordered responses.

TABLE A

Family Income: Student Characteristics Based on Cross Tabulations of Student Responses to the Survey Questions

Some 848 non-returning students responded to the family income question. These students, as a sub group, had the characteristics:

Family Income*	$0-$9,999		$10,000-$19,999		$20,000-$29,999		$30,000-$39,999		$40,000 & above	
Students and Incomes	90	9%	148	19%	189	22%	155	19%	266	31%
Regions										
1. Far SW.	21	14%	27	18%	30	21%	20	14%	48	33%
2. Southwestern	17	11%	29	19%	33	22%	30	20%	40	27%
3. Piedmont Valley	10	7%	20	14%	28	19%	25	17%	61	42%
4. Southside	13	10%	25	18%	32	24%	31	23%	35	26%
5. Urban Corridor	10	9%	27	20%	31	23%	26	19%	41	30%
6. Rural-Maritime	19	14%	20	14%	35	25%	23	17%	41	30%
Gender**										
Female	63	9%	87	18%	113	23%	88	19%	136	31%
Male	27	8%	61	20%	76	22%	67	19%	130	32%
Race***										
Black	17	8%	29	38%	16	20%	17	20%	9	14%
Other	3	17%	5	13%	1	2%	7	42%	5	26%
White	70	8%	114	16%	122	24%	311	17%	252	34%

*Family income data appear in the VCU "A Report to the VCCS on a Survey of Non-Returning Students" in Table 1, page 15.

**There were 487 or 57.4% females and 361 or 42.6% males.

***There were 88 or 10.4% Black, 21 or 4.3% other, and 739 or 87.1% white respondents.

Even with an open-ended question, 23% of the respondents in the $0--$9,999 family income bracket cited cost and not enough money or financial aid as a reason for not attending a community college in the fall 1992. For 22% of the respondents in the $10,000--$19,999 income bracket, cost and the lack of funds or aid were mentioned as reasons for not re-enrolling.

Students' relationships with full and part-time work reveal some significant differences between those students with family incomes of less than $10,000 and those with incomes of $10,000 to $19,999. Thirty-five percent of the students in the below $10,000 bracket worked full-time, 46% worked part-time, and 18% were unemployed. Some 66% of the students in the $10,000 to $19,999 income bracket worked full-time, 23% worked part-time, and 11% were unemployed.

Family Income	$0-$9,999		$10,000-$19,999		$20,000-$29,999		$30,000-$39,999		$40,000 and above	
Full-Time	33	35%	83	66%	103	52%	88	57%	124	62%
Part-Time	32	46%	41	23%	50	29%	43	27%	60	25%
Not at All	25	18%	24	11%	35	17%	24	16%	31	13%

Many non-returning students have transferred to another (non-VCCS) college, and others have obtained their educational objectives -- the job skills/knowledge they wanted or the degree or certificate they desired. See Table B.

In response to an open-ended question, only 15% of all the students surveyed gave the cost of attending a community college as a reason for not enrolling again in the fall 1992. Refer to the VCU Report, Table 1, page 7. A review of the responses from students earning less than $20,000, indicated that 23% of these low income students had cited the cost of attending college as the reason for not enrolling again in the fall 1992. Refer to the VCU Report, Table 7.

Decision Not To Return To A Community College: How Important Were Cost Factors?

Students were asked explicit questions about how important each of several cost factors were in the students decision not to return.

Question 5: How important was the cost of tuition and fees in your decision not to return?

The responses to the tuition and fees question correlate with the question about family income levels. Fifty-six percent of the students in the $0--$9,999 income bracket found the cost of tuition and fees to be very important or somewhat important. The percentage of importance then trails off -- 47% for students in the $10,000-$19,999 bracket; 40%, in the $20,000--$29,999 bracket; 37%, in the $30,000--$39,999 bracket; and 27%, in the $40,000 and above bracket. Refer to Table C, next page.

In regard to paying higher education costs, in terms of community college tuition and fees, the data show that students who had family incomes of less than $20,000, found tuition and fees to be an important factor in making a decision not to return to college in the fall 1992.

TABLE B

All Students' and Low Income Students' Reasons For Not Re-enrolling in the Fall 1992

Multiple Responses Rank Ordered from the Highest to Lowest Items	All Respondents N = 941*	Low Income Respondents N= 234**
No time or work schedule	30%	35%
Other reasons not specified on the response list	27%	30%
Cost too much, no money, and no financial aid	15%	23%
Transferred to another college	12%	12%
Obtained the job skills and knowledge that was needed	10%	7%
Courses or programs not available	7%	5%
Got a degree or a certificate	7%	4%
Dissatisfied with courses or teaching	3%	2%

*Refer to VCU Report, Table 1, page 7.
**Refer to VCU Report, Table 7. Low income students are those with family incomes of less than $20,000.

TABLE C

Family Income and the Importance of Tuition and Fees*

Effect on Re-enrolling	$0-$9,999		$10,000-$19,999		$20,000-$29,999		$30,000-$39,999		$40,000 and above	
Very Important	41	49%	40	31%	40	21%	27	22%	24	13%
Somewhat Important	12	7%	27	16%	30	19%	22	15%	30	14%
Not Important	30	44%	63	50%	108	60%	93	62%	175	73%

*Refer to VCU Report, Table 7, page 83.

Two other questions on the importance of the cost of textbooks and materials, and the cost of child care brought responses again from students in the less than $20,000 bracket that strengthen the case for financial support for low income students.

Responses to Questions About Financial Aid

Students were initially asked two questions about their need for and the receipt of financial aid:

Question 3: Did you apply for financial aid?
Question 3a: Were you awarded financial aid?

Forty-four percent of the respondents in the below $10,000 bracket had applied for aid, and 86% of them received awards. Some 36% of the respondents in the $10,000 to $19,999 bracket applied for aid, and 75% received awards. It is interesting to note that 81% of the applicants in the above $20,000 bracket also received awards, even though the percentage of applicants was low -- 17%. . See Table 7: Questions 3 and 3a, attached to this paper.

Family Income Items/ Respondents	$0-$9,999		$10,000-$19,999		$20,000-$29,999		$30,000-$39,999		$40,000 & above	
Applied for Financial Aid	50	44%	64	36%	44	17%	32	24%	21	8%
Received Aid	42	86%	47	75%	34	81%	20	59%	9	52%

Because only 44% of fall 1991 students, in the below $10,000 bracket, and 36% of the students in the $10,000 to $19,999 bracket had applied for financial aid, a question arose about how many of the students who did not apply for aid, might have been eligible to apply. To answer this question, the task force decided to analyze the responses of low income students (those with incomes of less than $20,000) by using the following kinds of survey information to determine the number of students who were <u>not</u> eligible for financial aid:

(1) Students who worked either full or part-time were asked if their employers had paid the tuition and fees for the coursework taken in the fall 1991. Students who received financial support from employers would obviously have less need for financial aid.

(2) If students had listed their academic goals as (a) taking one or more job related courses, (b) taking courses to explore career options, or (c) taking coursework for general knowledge or self-improvement, then it is assumed that these students enrolled for just one course in the fall 1991.

Of the 848 students responding to the question on family income, 238 students or 28% reported having family incomes of less than $20,000. One hundred fourteen (114) or 48% of the low income group had applied for financial aid, and 89 or 78% of the applicants received aid. One hundred twenty-four (124) did not apply for financial aid.

Low Income Student Applicants for Financial Aid	N's	%'s
Total number of students having family incomes less than $20,000	238	100%
Total number of students not applying for financial aid	124	52%
Total number of students applying for financial aid	114	48%

Among the students not applying for financial aid were those who had their tuition and fees paid by their employers; who took a course related to their work, to career exploration, to general knowledge and self-improvement; or who had no specified reason for taking a course. When the numbers of these students are subtracted from the total number of students not applying for aid, then the group of non-applicants decreases from 124 or 52% of all low income students to 34 students or 15% of the low income group.

Estimated Number of Non-applicants Who Could Have Applied for Aid	N's	%'s
Total number of students not applying for financial aid	124	52%
Employers paid tuition and fees	-31	-13%
Took course(s) related to the job, for career exploration, or for general knowledge, and self-improvement	-49	-20%
Others -- with no specified reasons for taking a course	-10	-4%
	34	15%

Answering the question about the extent to which low income students participated in the process of applying for and receiving financial aid is a major concern of the study. It is possible to utilize percentages, derived from student responses to survey questions, to estimate the numbers of fall 1991 non-returning

students who had low incomes, who applied for and received financial aid, and who were eligible for aid but did not apply for it. For example, the survey sample data showed that 238 or 28% of the respondents had placed themselves in the below $20,000 income category. Using this information, it is estimated that in the population of 76,191 non-returning students, there were approximately 21,300 low income students.

The use of the same estimating procedure, as above, has produced the estimates regarding low income students and their success in obtaining financial aid:

- Approximately 10,225 or 48% of the 21,300 low income students applied for financial aid, and 8,000 or 78% obtained financial aid awards.
- Nearly 11,075 or 52% of the 21,300 low income students did not apply for financial aid. It is estimated that 7,880 students or 37% of the low income students were not eligible to apply for aid.
- Some 3,195 or 15% of the low income students were probably eligible for aid, yet they did not apply.

There remains the issue about whether or not the System will have financial aid funds available in 1993-94 to provide aid to an additional group of low income students (perhaps numbering 3,200 or more), assuming that a greater number of students would apply for aid if they knew funds were available.

Question: What are the racial and gender characteristics of financial aid recipients?

Two hundred thirty-seven students or 21% of the 949 students surveyed, indicated that they had applied for financial aid in the fall 1991. Of these applicants, 167 or 73% received awards. Tables 2 and 3 in the VCU Report have cross tabulations showing the number of responses, by race and gender, to each of the survey questions. These data tables reveal that 85% of black financial aid applicants received awards, while 73% of white applicants and 53% other race applicants obtained awards. Sixty-five percent of all financial aid recipients were females and 35% were males. The tables also have data concerning the numbers of recipients for the various types of financial aid. The data support the finding that women and minorities are receiving an equitable proportion of financial aid awards, if they apply for them.

Question 3b: Which kind of aid did you receive?

Table D, on the next page, has data by type of awards and by race and gender. As might be expected, most students were awarded federal Pell grants. By race, 71% of the awards, blacks received, were Pell grants. Among awards given to white and other race students, Pell grants were also distributed in proportions of about 70%. When the distribution of awards is examined in terms of gender, it appears that 79% of the awards distributed to females were Pell grants, while males received 59% of their awards in the form of Pell grants. The distribution of other awards, by race and gender, appears to be quite equitable for such grants as the Supplemental

TABLE D

Financial Aid Recipients: Student Characteristics Based on Cross Tabulations of Student Responses to Survey Questions

Some 949 non-returning students responded to the survey questions on financial aid. A sub-group of 237 students indicated that they had received awards. The types of awards and the characteristics of the students who received them are displayed below:

	RACE						SEX			
	Black		Other		White		Female		Male	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Q3a: Were you awarded financial aid?										
Yes	33	85%	6	53%	128	73%	108	72%	59	74%
No	10	15%	4	47%	56	27%	46	28%	24	26%
Total	43	100%	10	100%	184	100%	154	100%	83	100%
Q3b: Which kind of aid did you receive?										
Other (specify)	5	14%	1	5%	19	16%	17	14%	8	15%
Pell	25	71%	5	72%	93	69%	84	79%	39	59%
Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG)	1	3%			6	4%	3	3%	4	7%
College Work-study Program			1	28%	8	7%	5	7%	4	7%
College Scholarship Assistance Grant (CSAP)	1	12%			6	6%	5	3%	2	10%
"VCCS" grant (state discretionary aid)	1	1%			8	3%	4	2%	5	3%
Employer Helped					1	0%			1	0%
Guaranteed Student Loan Program (GSL)	2	5%	1	5%	2	3%	2	2%	3	6%
Stafford Loan					6	6%	2	1%	4	8%
Local Scholarship from College	1	2%	1	28%	1	1%	2	2%	1	5%
Don't Know	2	2%	1	28%	12	6%	11	11%	4	3%
Total	33	100%	6	100%	127	100%	107	100%	59	100%

*Source: A Report to the Virginia Community College System on a Survey of Non-Returning Students, from the VCU Survey of Non-Returning Students, conducted by the VCU Survey Research Laboratory. For race data, see page 31; and for gender data, see page 19. November 12, 1992.

Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG), College Scholarship Assistance Grant (CSAP), Guaranteed Student Loan Program (GSL), and the awards grouped under Local Scholarship from the College. There is also data indicating that the VCCS grant (state discretionary aid) is becoming an important item among the awards granted to community College students.

Summary on Financial Aid

The data on fall 1991 students, who responded to the survey questions, indicate that so-called serious students -- those taking two or more courses per semester -- had a reasonable opportunity to apply for and receive financial aid, if they met the eligibility conditions of the awards categories. The study results have shown that if low income students apply for aid, 78% of them receive awards.

There are two issues which greatly impact the System's capability to provide financial aid as the cost of an education, particularly tuition and fees, continue to increase. These issues are stated below as questions:

(1) Would the System have, in 1993-94, financial aid funding sufficient to provide aid awards to an increased number of low income students (if all eligible low income students applied)?

(2) Would the Virginia legislature entertain an initiative to provide part-time students, especially those taking one course, with financial aid funds to defray cost of such items as tuition and fees?

A review of the System's financial aid trend data, for the years 1989-90 to 1991-92, has established a profile on the number of unduplicated financial aid recipients and the amounts of aid granted to them. Refer to Table E. At this time, the records on 1992-93 financial aid awards are incomplete.

The System's financial aid program has increased, considerably, in the number of students who have received awards and in the amount of funds dispersed:

- From 1989-90 to 1991-92, the unduplicated number of students receiving financial aid increased by 41%, from 17,872 to 25,130. This increase accommodated the financial aid needs of an additional 7,258 students. Most of the growth occurred in the grants area, i.e., with awards like the Pell grants. Refer to Table E.

- Funds distributed to financial aid recipients grew by 43%, from $32,341,477 to $46,218,149. Community college financial aid recipients, therefore, had available to them, by 1991-92, an additional $13,876,672. Refer to Table E.

- To provide financial aid for part-time students, the System had in, 1991-92, discretionary aid funds in the amount of $3,428,634; and in 1992-93, $5,639,369. An additional $2,457,264 has been requested by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia in its budget submission to the legislature for 1993-94.

TABLE E

VCCS Unduplicated Financial Aid Recipients and Total Dollars by Selected Category for the Years 1989-90 to 1991-92*

Aid Category	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92
Grants			
No. Recipients	17,410	19,378	24,664
Total Dollars	$22,056,819	$24,138,593	$34,784,095
Loans			
No. Recipients	4,749	4,504	4,999
Total Dollars	$6,670,913	$6,403,053	$7,156,472
Scholarships			
No. Recipients	1,610	1,670	1,941
Total Dollars	$864,311	$1,118,615	$1,293,760
Work-study			
No. Recipients	2,621	2,788	2,662
Total Dollars	$2,749,434	$3,033,598	$2,983,822
Totals			
No. Recipients (Unduplicated)	17,872	19,872	25,130
No. Total Financial Aid Dollars	$32,341,477	$34,693,859	$46,218,149

*Source: VCCS Office of Academic Services and Research.

Increases in financial aid funds, both grants and loans, have given community college students a greater opportunity to have financial assistance for their educations. For instance, there was enough money in the Pell aid category to take care of eligible students in 1991-92. And if federal and state funding is maintained at the same or somewhat higher levels, then student access to aid should be assured. Students who enroll for one course at a time are still at a disadvantage as far as receiving aid is concerned.

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions to the study are based on the task force findings concerning the key issue in the charge:

> "The task force is charged with the responsibility of studying and reporting on the changes that have occurred to VCCS program enrollments, student demographic characteristics, and the distribution of financial aid, which suggest that tuition increases or other economic factors may have or may not have worked to limit the enrollments of females, minorities, and/or low income students. . . ."

The task force reviewed VCCS tuition data, fall term headcount and demographic data, and financial aid records and concluded:

> *It is concluded that at a time when the System's enrollments continue to grow, there were not, for the System as a whole, enrollment subgroups with declining numbers. There were instances where colleges in Southside Virginia or Southwest Virginia had lower numbers of first-time students or a drop in occupational-technical program evening students; but many conditions, other than cost, can bring about fewer enrollments in a particular enrollment classification. See page 2 of the report.*

The task force decided that the best source of information for a study on the effects which increased costs were having on community college enrollments would be the population of fall 1991 students who did not re-enroll in the fall 1992. Some 76,191 students, enrolled in the colleges in the fall 1991, did not re-enroll in the fall 1992. (The patterns of community college enrollments are such that in the fall 1992, a group of 94,015 did re-enroll.) The task force developed a non-returning student survey form to gather information, via the telephone, from some 949, fall 1991 students.

During the survey, students were asked questions about family income, their educational goals, the receipt of financial aid, and their reasons for not returning to the colleges in the fall 1992. Conclusions about student responses to the survey questions were grouped by the categories: (1) the students' decision not to re-enroll in the fall 1992, (2) the importance of tuition and other costs in the students' decisions not to return to the community college in the fall 1992, and (3) the application for and receipt of financial aid.

Decision Not to Return to a Community College

In response to an open-ended question about their reasons for not re-enrolling in the fall 1992, the former students rank ordered responses (highest to lowest) were: (1) no time or work schedule, (2) other reasons not specified by the questionnaire, (3) cost too much, no money, and no financial aid, (4) transferred to another college, (5) obtained the job skills and knowledge that was needed,

(6) courses or programs not available, (7) got a degree or a certificate, and (8) dissatisfied with courses or teaching.

In answering an open-ended question, only 15% of all the students surveyed gave the cost of attending a community college as a reason for not enrolling again in the fall 1992. A review of the responses from students earning less that $20,000, indicated that 23% of these low income students had cited the cost of attending college as the reason for not enrolling again in the fall 1992.

In answering a direct question about tuition and fees, 56% of the students in the $0--$9,999 income bracket and 47% of the students in the $10,000 to $20,000 bracket found the cost of tuition and fees to be very important or somewhat important in making a decision not to return to the colleges.

Students' relationships with full and part-time work reveal some significant differences between those students with family incomes of less than $10,000 and those with incomes of $10,000 to $19,999. Thirty-five percent of the students in the below $10,000 bracket worked full-time, 46% worked part-time, and 18% were unemployed. Some 66% of the students in the $10,000 to $19,999 income bracket worked full-time, 23% worked part-time, and 11% were unemployed.

It is concluded that in regard to paying higher education costs, half the community college students who had family income of less than $20,000, found the cost of tuition and fees to be a factor of considerable importance in making a decision not to return to the college in the fall 1992.

It is also concluded that students in the $0--$10,000 family income bracket have the greatest need because so many of them only have part-time work or none at all. Students in this group should be identified -- if at all possible -- and informed by college staff about the possibilities of receiving financial aid.

Students' Need for and Receipt of Financial Aid

Students interviewed during the telephone survey were asked questions about whether or not they had applied for and received financial aid. The task force was most interested in the matter of low income, female, and minority students -- particularly how these students fared in the process of applying for financial aid and attaining awards.

Using the study data, it was found that of the 848 students responding to the question on family income, 238 students or 28% reported having family incomes of less than $20,000. One hundred fourteen (114) or 48% of the low income group had applied for financial aid, and 89 or 78% of the applicants received aid. One hundred twenty-four (124) did not apply for financial aid. By using the percentage of 28%, it is estimated that in the population of 76,191 students there were approximately 21,300 low income students.

The use of the same estimating procedure, as above, has produced the estimates on low income students' success in obtaining financial aid:

- Approximately 10,225 or 48% of the 21,300 low income students applied for financial aid, and 8,000 or 78% obtained financial aid awards.

- Nearly 11,075 or 52% of the 21,300 low income students did not apply for financial aid. It is estimated that 7,880 students or 37% of the low income students were not eligible to apply for aid.

- Some 3,195 or 15% of the low income students were probably eligible for aid, yet they did not apply.

The information, above, on students' being eligible for aid but not applying for it leads to the following conclusion:

There appears to be a gray area where some VCCS students who might be eligible for financial aid are not getting the information they need to make a decision to apply for aid. The colleges need to study and revise procedures for notifying students, especially part-time students, about financial aid possibilities.

The study has documented the System's increases in both the number of students who have received financial aid and in the amounts of aid received during 1989-90, 1990-91, and 1991-92.

- From 1989-90 to 1991-92, the unduplicated number of students increased by 41%, from 17,872 to 25,130. This increase accommodated the financial aid needs of an additional 7,258 students. Most of the growth occurred in the grants area, i.e., with awards like the Pell grants. Refer to Table E.

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- To provide financial aid for part-time students, the System had in, 1991-92, discretionary aid funds in the amount of $3,429,634; and in 1992-93, $5,639,369. An additional $2,457,264 has been requested by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia in its budget submission to the legislature for 1993-94.

Survey responses on financial aid questions also yielded data on the racial and gender characteristics of fall 1991 financial aid recipients. Some 277 students applied for aid and 167 or 73% received awards. The data reveal that 85% of black financial aid applicants received awards, while 73% of white applicants and 53% other race applicants obtained awards. Sixty-five percent of all financial aid recipients were females and 35% were males. The tables also have data concerning the numbers of recipients for the various types of financial aid. The data support the finding that women and minorities are receiving an equitable proportion of financial aid awards, if they apply for them.

Regarding the System's performance with providing financial aid to its students, there is need to make a very positive statement.

The System's performance in providing financial aid to students at the 23 community colleges is excellent. In 1991-92, some 25,130 students received awards in the amount of $46,218,149. Part-time students now have the opportunity to apply for and (with certain pre-conditions being met) receive aid. Discretionary funds of $8,096,633 are in the offing, for 1993-94.

January 25, 1993